

March 11, 2010

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing

RE: School Based Medical Clinic Testimony

Dear Sir or Madam:

**We are the medical staff who provides direct care to our children at Weaver High School. As we read about the Governor's Deficit Mitigation Plan for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2010 calling for a \$1 million dollar reduction to School Based Health Centers, we feel the need to speak up and be heard. We have already seen school based center funding drop by \$522,032 this year already! How much more can we cut from children's services?**

School Based Health Centers are the *immediate* solution for children who cannot access their primary care doctor when they are sick, injured, or need mandatory physical exams for school. These Centers promote the physical and mental health of our children, provide *links* to community care and follow up, and help lift some of the burden off of already *stressed* families and educators. Let us give you an example:

16 y/o "Miss Student" comes to the school clinic with a sore throat saying, "I don't feel well, I want to go home". Evaluated by the nurse practitioner who does a rapid strep test, it is found the child does in fact have *strep throat*. A call is placed to her mother who says, "I really need to work or I will get fired for taking another day off, what can I do?". Collaborating with the single mom, arrangements are made for medicine to be dispensed by the clinic, written instructions and care handouts provided, and treatment started within the clinic. Mom is relieved she doesn't have to jeopardize her employment, she doesn't have to go pick up a prescription somewhere, she doesn't have to try and juggle her schedule for an immediate doctor appointment, AND she doesn't have to go to the emergency room. "Ahhhhh she says....if I had to take her to the emergency room I would wait for hours...." It is well known that emergency rooms are over-burdened. One could ask the question, "Should the emergency rooms be the solution for non-urgent care when a student cannot access their doctor?"

**Weaver's Medical Clinic** sees over 400 nurse practitioner and mental health visits **per month**. Less than 1% are sent home! Why?? The ability to provide an *immediate* diagnosis and treatment pathway to care is working. Why send a child home that is not sick and miss valuable educational time?

Vaccinations rates at our clinic have steadily increased, doubling data in 2009, and showing 2010 increases in capturing children with late, missed, or never vaccinated before status. Working in conjunction with the Department of Public Health, our Sexually Transmitted Disease program offers students a *safe and confidential* environment to get tested, treated, and **EDUCATED**. Students feel safe following up in *their* medical clinic at Weaver. How many students would fail to get tested or follow up elsewhere?

Lastly, one cannot emphasize enough the impact that school based medical centers have on families. Hard working families in Hartford have suffered enough employment losses, higher insurance rates or loss of health insurance altogether. Where do they turn? They turn to the school based clinics. **It is imperative that our great State realizes the long-term functional ability of the school based clinics to make an impact on our children's educational pathway and keep kids learning by keeping kids in school.**

Sincerely,

Nancy Mayeda-Brescia, APRN, FNP-C, OTD

Celia Perez, Mental Health Clinician

Kris Rusin, Data Entry Specialist

Pamela Lyons, Medical Assistant